M	O	U
S	E	E
G	G	S

STILL50 4

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every fifteen minutes
the coming of the end is announced on the news as news

everyone's at war with everyone's at war with everyone's at war

is war man's natural state?
we haven't evolved at all: only the nnweapons

want to hear a polish joke?
they're news.
in trying to come together
they have come apart

and south africa forced independance on two million blacks;
declared their most drought likely land their home

and the ceremonial flagpole in the middle of the midnight
flag raising ceremony, snapped in two

and is the middle east,
the center of its start,
the center of its end?

every fifteen minutes

endre farkas
dec 81

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there is a gnawing inside;
from more than just hunger,
as if the belly had grown teeth
and is chomping, tearing, chewing;
madly trying to get out

outside friends are friendless; are lost in dead electric cities:
connected to nothing

the world is low on energy
there is a souless shadow clouding out the sun; a vampire
with canines sunk into our well being

no one is doing well these days
I walk to the end of the pier at the tip of the island
and peer into the night

there is no night no more
the night has been raped

where will we go for our dreams?

there is a churning inside giving rise to bad breath:
giving head to bad moon under which we scuttle like cockroaches

and plan each other's death
forgetting that it's suicide

endre farkas
dec 81

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Mountain Lotus

I am walking in the alley
and it's garbage night--
boxes and bags piled up and opened everywhere--
and the only point of balance I can feel
is this:
a little girl walks up to me
with her tiny kitten, offering to let me
touch it as if she were holding
in her small long arms, all of the future.

Mountain Memo

Shake off the crazies--sober up, Li Po!
Thousands of wine cups and moon cakes ago,
your voice used to make people's faces glow:
it could catch the sparks of hooves in a poem,
or nylons of dew from the flying clouds.
Things change. Swallows nest under your roof now,
but home's still magic. Why wait till there's snow
in the picture here up at Old Man's Brow?
Mountains are mountains, you know. Come back home.
Bring your lightningrod pen. Forget the crowds.

from Tu Fu

Mountain Tambourine

A crew took part of the big tree away
on my street. A poplar, it was throwing
its ashes, its dirty pillow stuffing,
around too much. So they said. Anyway,
people were getting tired of it. It was too gray.
It might drop a tired branch and hit something,
a power or phone line. What's still standing
they'll come for tomorrow and chop away.
It doesn't make much poplar talk now. The big
clatter's gone out of it. On the older
side of the street, the last tree stands, tall, big,
full, leafy--a fine shade and rain holder.
It leans to one side at a warm angle,
like Annie, whose door it covered last fall.

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Peter van Toorn

Free Translations from Catullus — John McAuley

1. These poems come from a crumbling world of pumice.
Cocoons of lies fill every pore and I have discovered
the discomfort of lies. My essential self is all runny
nougat chocolate. I stomach my useless awe although
certain flying tribes have explained symbols on maps
once doctored by Jove. With lonely arms, I flap like a quail
which is a sacrificial gift, my chief metaphor.

46. Spring's unzephyrous wind brings a sandy grit
that polishes a furious thirst upon my lips,
and so I am camped beside the faucet
where clear as Asia is the voluminous burping flow.
I am a man who travels on three small feet,
a passing vagrant, like death who weighs heavily
over my astonishment at being late.
My studio vegetates, emptily.
Oh soft committee of leaves, you long to stimulate life
in this imperfect dominion.
Diverting, veiled, varied and true is this report.

49. Rome is a city of nepotists
who like the gamey entertainment of the mob.
What is the reason for its fury now, Marcus Tullius?
What will you do with all the rocks
which they post at your runty guards?
(provided by your aunts)
Catullus thanks the mob with bows
for this inarticulate age.
Catullus knows the most pessimistic poet
is the one who finds the most optimistic patron.

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JIM MELE

THE GREATER GLORY

In the monastery of St. Katherine
they gather the bones of the dead
& pile them in a small room.
I once saw something similar
in Rome - a certain order of monks
used their brethren's bones
for a chapel, heads piled in arches,
shins for an altar railing.
A sign in four languages
asks you not to write on the bones.
For some reason, it's
the only tourist sight
open on Ascension Day.

FOR ONE NIGHT

One day I connected bird calls
to birds. I saw the familiar clipped
bleating come from the blackbird,
the screaming fly by with the blue jay.
Simple colors for names, so simple
we forget their other lives.
For one night, I do not.

IN THE LIGHT OF DAY

Nothing is any clearer because
it's held in the sunlight.
No, in our curiosity
to know everything that happens
we pretend we have
some better understanding.
As if that's reason enough
to ask any question.
Getting it out, we confuse
the motive, the response.

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JIM MELE

WHAT I SAY

A dark room, a single
cone of light over the desk:
this is on location, saying
what could confuse
& lying about its worth.
Value, in words at least,
is a foolish concept. And
extended to sentences, no
make that complete thoughts,
it still signifies nothing.
In the last count, this
is what we say matters.

A WEEK FROM NOW

God, the way we order time
so casually: now, then,
in a week, a minute.
But do we understand it,
& when Einstein made his
statement only the scientists
were surprised. So obvious
though of course not
the way he said it. Fourth
dimension. No, but it
casts a shadow as sharp
as any single man in the sun.

A CHANGE IN TERMS

Where do universally accepted terms
meet the individual life.
There is a possibility
that the individual doesn't exist,
that it's a hundred year delusion.
Maybe it began even further back,
an after effect of the Bubonic Plague
or a residual lead poisoning
carried in a new industrial air,
the Romantics exhibiting the first
symptoms. That's it, individualism
isn't threatened by this modern world,
it's really a by product, a toxic reaction.

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Today I have begun to masturbate
my heart. I cannot forget
your white coat, red scarf

I am going to place you on a grey pedestal,
still as a portrait.

***

January Sonnet, A Postcard Poem for Ken

In your poems, lovers
are separated, sometimes
by miles, SOMETIMES heartbeats,
modes of living, sharing spaces.
I was in New York when Lennon was shot,
you were in Hawaii, his killer's home.
Coincidental
circumstance.
The spectre of the tropical sun
has not found its way to Montreal
where record freezing temperatures have numbed
and hypnotized, held hostage my joie de vivre.
Time assaults me in the parking lot-
I empty my heart's vault, delighting in change.

***

Instinctively,
ice is cold to the touch, the wind
unwelcome, the sun neutral, a photo
in the sky, these neighbours, robots,
winding down, these cars, toys, these
children, squirrels, these buildings,
cardboard flats, this city, a theatre,
admission two dollars.

***

And it came to pass
after these things
that she accepted my love
and loved me in return.

Write for your book now!

***

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STRONG SONG

green blades push up,
yellow suns line the road
each hour the hills are greener
brook's melody delicate and i,
i'm pushing up with the green things
but my heart's not whole.
i look behind, where love took me -
the tower crumbles

flame azalea and honeysuckle
help me move on along the road,
i push up with teams of iris,
bleeding heart, clematis vines
and though i'm not whole,
i'm going to be

cel
april 1981

SHIRT SHOCK

i know why my heart hurts
and when it hurts, it hurts
and i know it, like when
your shirt attacked me
from an innocent closet corner,
and you not in it, like when
my tears sprang out to meet
your shirt, damned shirt

cel
august 81

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REFLECTIONS, after Nemerov

When a man comes of age

When a man's of age enough
he comes to accept the earth
and the smallness of his imprint on her.
Answers have receded and he allows that
and codes in leaf and wave are not deciphered
nor will they be as he walks under leaf or along wave
and is, because of his seasons, less separate now
from them than once when he sang his strength and
showed off the shine of his mind,
intricate as leaf,
dazzling as wave

He knows better now, reflects,
knows to be silent
his still-sharp eyes recall
the slim figure he was and
then let go as he recedes into
pondside leaves of some other autumn

It's time to go now,
perhaps to light that dapples just as bright
as times ago - even reflections go into light.
In moment of letting go, he can embrace now
leaf, wave, green light - the whole

cel
sept. 21, 1981

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ICE

Stephen Morrissey

How grey the sky is. We will have more snow, more ice, soon the whole earth will be nothing but ice, nothing but a movement of glaciers and darkness. All that is left of society are small nomadic bands of people searching through garbage dumps for food and sleeping together to keep warm. How can I continue? why not give up here, give it all up and renounce this silliness --- preserving my life for another five minutes, as though ~~five minutes~~ this next five minutes had any more value than the accumulated five minute periods that make up my life. Why not dig a hole here and lie down and let the snow fall over it and over me until I am buried and dead and five minutes becomes an eternity and all time is a cow lying ripped open and eaten beside that ripped carcass. If only I could enter the dead eye of the cow, enter it and become a worm and eat the cow's right eye and become the cow's memories that are recorded on the surface of the eye like a negative there would be hot days and I could bat the flies off my back with my long tail, I could stand cowlike and curious by the roadside and watch the men go off to work in the fields, I could abandon the road I am on that leads to a frozen death and an eternity of five minutes of freezing death in that of the cow. I go to the carcass of the cow and lie down in the cow and hold its eye in my hand. It becomes glowing and hot and I place it in my mouth and hold it there. The carcass is warm and I carress the ribs and bones, I run my hand along a particularly white bone and then stop and feel its smoothness beneath my fingers, it is like ivory. And the ribs are perfect in their rpogress from relatively small to relatively large. I know I have now entered a cave in this cow's body, it is the cave of man and I am at home in this final hole on the side of a road. I know that it is a catacomb of the last minutes of man and I see myself resting quietly and peacefully in layers of cow ribs and each copy of myself is slightly different The final religion I started has come to this silence of a cow's belly and I am in a night of stolen relics, churches torn open by the revolution and the worshippers thrown into the streets, the church ransacked and then we tied ropes to the walls and simultaneously pulled on all four sides so that the building, that empty carcass, collapsed inward with a rush of yellow air and incense. But my religion of silence, of walking the streets at night so desperately alone and always hoping and praying I would meet someone who would be kind, that true religion has come to this conclusion in ice, to move the catacombs of the self and a cave of ice and blood and bone. I move the cow's burning eye to my other cheek and listen for the cow's heart beat; it was there a second ago. I distinctly heard that repetitive thumping in my ear which is resting of the shattered vertebrae. I hold the eye in my hand and it looks at me, it has many questions and understands nothing of this spiritual voyage, this transgression of existence, this shipwreck that lies humiliated and splinitered on a white beach of no hope. For the cow's carcass has become a silent ship for me, a resting place. I am beached and I can hear the cow's living heart or the sea and a cold wind buffeting the carcass. The eye blinks and closes and when I open it is glazed and white. Will the cow suddenly come to life and carry me, a human foenus in the cow, and lumber across the white field. Will it shit me out or will I be born through its ear, its nose, through its blind eye? Are we the children of the cow god, and then they take those cows which are in fact children and butcher them not hearing their cries of

ARCHIVE scan 2017

stop stop can't you see us can't you see that we are your children? But they do not see ~~my hands~~ as they lead us by the nose, prodding our ribs with the sharp blows of a wooden cane, and laughing and smoking cigarettes, take us to the abatoir, and we have finally given up all hope. What couldn't happen is happening, we are being butchered by out own parents; why are they doing this to us? I run my fingers across the bones, pick one bone up and prod about in the ground beneath me, and there is the cow's head, one eye frozen open, nose etched in blood, lips pulled up revealing rows of teeth. The eye that is open stares at me. The cow's mouth begins to move and I drop the head in fright. The first sounds are guttural; they creak out of its half parted lips. The nose flares and one word becomes intelligible. It speaks but when I try to reply I realize that my own voice has gone. I have been silent for so long that I can no longer speak. The head looks at me reproachfully one moment and then remorsefully. I am the priest of the religion that brought you to this, cow; I am the one who helped butcher your five calves and I ate them without once thinking that they were your children and I would have eaten you had I had the chance. The polar wind enters the cow's carcass and I take the head and put it under my own head as a pillow. It continues to blink its one eye and the blood coming from its nose is warm beneath my cheek. We shall fall asleep together cow and welcome in the millenium in our eternal sleep. We shall sleep a thousand years and then arise and be known as one god, one being. Go ahead cow and eat my cheek pressed against your mouth, eat the flesh of this body that has been fattened by the flesh of five hundred cows; eat the nose and ear off the ~~fa~~ head that has only desired to be reduced to nothing; to become nothing, empty, a hollow shell not only in thought but in fact; eat the whole head off this stooped body and then begin on the arms and legs and build yourself up. Be my guest as I am your guest in the cave of your white rib cage. Eat this white flesh that lies within you, that holds you to be a catacomb of old beings, a bit of reality abandoned here by someone who has searched for the final redemption of thought in something more terrible than he expected. Let us become one and leave the world in a blizzrd of snow.

ELEMENTS OF A NEW HOLY GRAIL

I have been for years a priest of silence. First, my own silence, not speaking, keeping to myself, not really having anything to say, because I had no thoughts, just inarticulate feelings and desires. A new silence gradually appeared and I became a priest of that ~~silen~~ silence and performed my duties to that world of trees and open fields and the wind in the grass, being a part of nature. A new monastery of being and silence appeared so gradually no one saw it growing;.the new self appeared and it was a priest of silence but didn't know silence because it was too consumed with words even though denying that it was so. And I entered that new monastic life and was placed in a highwhair and wore a pointed dunce's hat painted with stars and red moons and held in one hand a mask and in the other a long stick with a star on the end. And as I sat there, for twenty years or longer, I copied out versions of my life in both little drawings and words, episodes held together by time and pain, and I have copied the same experience by heart many times each time it is different and the excercise is to get it right. By this means of copious scribbling, the past has acquired even greater distortions. Its authenticity has slipped into doubts and the mixed feelings of

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KEN NORRIS

FOR STEPHEN, FROM THE COOK ISLANDS

Just this morning I was thinking about how
I should write you a poem about the high clouds
and tender blue ocean, how the still world
thrives here, how meditation is impossible
in the South Pacific for everything I see puts me in a trance;
and then I went to the post office in Avarua
which hasn't been treating me too kindly,
sending back letters before I ever got here,
but somehow the letter you wrote me slipped through.
Think of a friend and suddenly he is there in some form,
I could see you as the words rose off the page
and into my mind. It is all poetry,
what concerns us, what we speak to each other about,
and out of our private existentialisms some fondness has formed,
it being hard for both of us sometimes to feel
instantaneous warmth towards other human beings.
I recognize my own struggle in so many of the things
you have written: to become real, to become whole,
to write out of the center of one's being,
the true center, the envisioning heart.

You write to tell me about the things I have
been wondering about, the trappings of poetry,
the bizness as you would write it,
and of the smallness that demeans beauty,
the mongrel dogs as I have written it,
barking and yapping in the streets, a testimony
to decay and ignorance. It's so hard to fight it off,
the world places an increasing desire in our hearts,
it is so easy to become small and mean and cynical;
we fight it off as best we're able, strive for a growing integrity.

Three dogs are walking on the rocks beside the sea,
and I can't help but wonder if writing about dogs
I have called them up: three dogs sniffing at the rocks.
The ocean moves against itself sometimes, creating currents
I couldn't begin to deal with, just two days ago
the ocean swept me up in one and carried me fifty feet.
That was in shallow water so of course I let it carry me
and made that short voyage joyously, there was no danger in it,
nothing to fear. The horizon is clouded today,
the sea flat and dull, this is getting written,
a woman is squatting in the water
and pounding something, a shellfish perhaps, upon a rock.
Our lives go on as we move through time,
as we journey, as we investigate.

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FOR JOHN, FROM THE COOK ISLANDS

I don't know what your present agony is
but friends write and tell me the times have been rough for you
and I just want to write and tell you
that I feel for you in your struggle,
remember the painful position, still find myself in pain sometimes
on my trip through paradise. It is something we can
never get free of, pain always there any time we look,
we are always in pain over something: the old pain,
the new pain, the pain of anticipation, the horrible
pain of failure. And then there are the times
pain intensifies to the point where it becomes unbearable,
and from what I understand that's what you're going through right now

The heart's gotten darker for me, I no longer see it
as a cornocopia of our finer nature, there's dark corruption
in the heart, though I feel that it's been placed there
like a spy rather than being something that's there from the start.
You can't always trust "the heart," you've got to know
which one of its voices is speaking.

Really don't know what your life is like these days,
don't know, don't know, but want to put
my love for you as a friend out into the air
so that perhaps it may arrive as a bird
on your windowsill one morning in the spring that is starting
where you are, and sing its simple joyous song
that, for a moment, can ease your heavy, restless heart.

****

FOR JIM, FROM NEW ZEALAND

James, the explorers passed by here in a tentative mood,
they must have been struggling or at least been wondering;
it's revealed in the style of their naming.
To the south there's Preservation Inlet
and a bit north of that there's Doubtful Sound.
Off the coast of Stewart Island
lie the Faith, Hope and Charity islands,
and somewhere close at hand the snow-crusted peak
of Mount Aspiring is scraping the sky,
that's the name I like the most
and isn't that just like me?

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FOR TOM, FROM TAHITI

Sitting out on the balcony of my room on a Sunday morning,
listening to the traffic go by and watching the mist
rise off the incredible inland hills, just a minute ago
I walked out here and tripped over my own pants leg
and ripped it, wouldn't you know it, right along the seam.
If you think New York is something
you should come to Tahiti sometime, the palm trees
dazzle, there is everything you could ever want here.

Went to the Gauguin Museum yesterday, read the legend
of how he wanted to start an artist's colony in the tropics
but wound up coming here alone, and I could identify with that.
At times I've felt if only I could get you and the others here
my life would be complete, so would yours,
we'd be able to create in weather conditions
approximating paradise as opposed to the ninth circle of hell.

I wonder how we'd all flower here, I wonder
how you'd flower, I wonder if the fog would take you away;
there's a loud yes at the center of everything here,
the natural world in any case, can't tell much
about the human society and I won't stay long enough
to really penetrate to the heart of it.
Sometimes Papeete reminds me of Montreal;
it's the French style, been away from it so long,
didn't realize how much I was starting to miss it.
Just like in Montreal "Ici les nuits sont tres belles,"
and I wonder how the nights proceed for you;
I imagine the lights from the top of Place Ville Marie
still coursing through the sky. I have lived
in so many romantic places, this is only
the latest stop, though the last on my way
through the dream-like Pacific.

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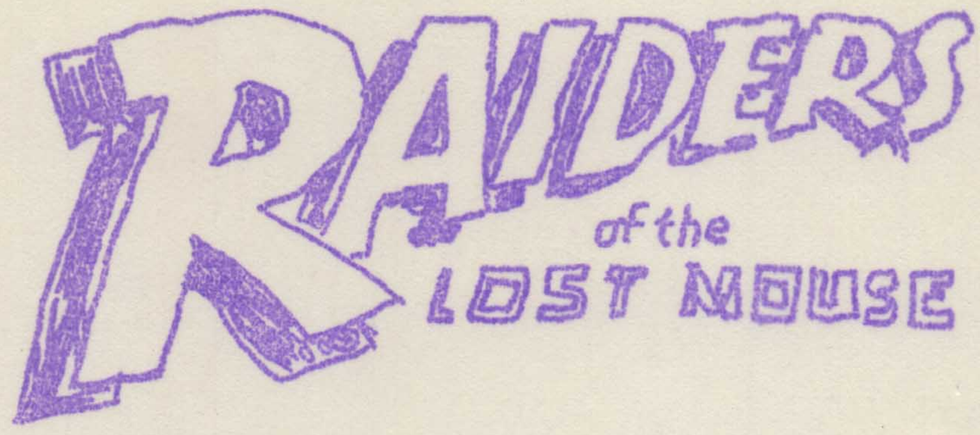

HOW WE SPENT TIME IN THE DAYS OF 1981

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GRASS-ROOTS FOREVER!

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